

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5587

As of February 14, 2013

Title: An act relating to student assessments.

Brief Description: Concerning student assessments.

Sponsors: Senators Litzow, Dammeier, Rivers, Fain and Tom.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/13/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Federal Assessment Requirements. Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), states must assess students in grades three through eight and once in high school on reading and mathematics; and on science once at each level of elementary, middle, and high school. NCLB/ESEA does not require that students pass the high school assessment to graduate from high school; however, this is a state requirement.

Washington Assessment Requirements. In addition to the federally-required assessments, students in Washington take a writing assessment in grades four, seven, and ten.

Washington High School Graduation Requirements. Since 2008, students have been required to meet the state standard on the state grade ten high school assessments in reading and writing to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) and graduate from high school.

Washington is in the process of transitioning from a comprehensive mathematics assessment to two mathematics End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in Algebra I or Geometry, and Integrated Math I or Integrated Math II. The graduating classes of 2013 and 2014 must only meet the state standards on one EOC assessment rather than both to graduate. Beginning with the class of 2015, students must meet the state standard on both mathematics EOC assessments to graduate from high school.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Beginning with the class of 2015 and beyond, students must also pass the high school science assessment to graduate. The science assessment is currently a biology EOC. However, the Legislature declared that it does not intend to narrow the statewide science assessment to only biology and at the appropriate time intends to direct the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop one or more EOCs in additional science subjects.

Each school district must offer students who do not meet the state standard on a high school assessment the opportunity to retake the assessment at least twice per year. Additionally, the Legislature approved several objective alternative assessments for students who are unsuccessful on the high school assessment.

Assessments Aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Washington joined one of two state consortia using a federal grant to develop new language arts and mathematics assessments in grades three through eight and grade 11 that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and test college and career readiness at the high school level. The assessments must be ready for use by the 2014-15 school year. To continue in the consortia after the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, Washington must agree to use the consortia-developed tests to meet the requirements of the NCLB/ESEA.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The Superintendent of Public Instruction, with the State Board of Education (SBE), must modify the statewide assessment to implement the comprehensive English language arts and mathematics assessments developed by the multistate consortium by the 2014-15 school year. The mathematics EOCs are not administered after the 2013-14 school year.

As the state transitions from the EOC mathematics assessments to a comprehensive mathematics assessment, the graduating class of 2015, for purposes of the CAA, must be assessed using the EOC assessment for the first year of high school mathematics plus the EOC assessment for the second year of high school mathematics, or the results from a high school mathematics retake assessment for the EOC assessments in which the student did not meet the standard. For the graduating class of 2016, for purposes of the CAA, the student may choose to be assessed using the EOC assessment for the first year of high school mathematics plus the EOC assessment for the second year of high school mathematics, or the new comprehensive mathematics assessment. The student may also use the appropriate retakes and alternative assessments available.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2017, a student must meet the state standards on the new English language arts and mathematics assessments or approved alternatives to earn the CAA and graduate from high school. The English language arts and mathematics assessments must be comprehensive assessments and not EOCs. School districts must still offer retakes at least twice a year. SBE must identify the scores that a student must achieve on certain alternative assessments. The science assessment requirement is unchanged.

Three references in the higher education statutes are amended to change the term tenth grade assessment to high school statewide assessment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: CON: Twenty-six states have a high school exit exam and 24 do not. We all want to simplify and make the graduation assessment requirements make sense. We support fewer exit exams for high school and then we can add the college and career readiness assessments, which are and should be different targets. The exit exam started as a minimum or floor, and the college and career assessment requires much higher learning. Most of our students will not meet the college readiness cut score. Other states decided to have a lower cut score for a high school exit exam and keep the higher cut score that shows institutions of higher education that students are ready for post-secondary work or education. The transition is not sufficient because some students are taking the Algebra EOCs in eighth grade and they should be allowed to use them to count toward graduation in 2017 and not be required to pass the new test.

OTHER: We strongly support the common core state standards and the assessments of the standards. It represents what students will need to be successful after high school. We have concerns about how to transition to the new test. You need to consider a transitional bar to ease students into the requirements of the assessments. Do not use this as an exit exam – use this as an incentive because it shows that you are ready for college admissions.

Persons Testifying: CON: Randy Dorn, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Marie Sullivan, WA State School Directors Assn.

OTHER: Anne Luce, Partnership for Learning, Washington Roundtable; Vicki Christophersen, Stand for Children.